

Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center

1900 Williams Street - P.O. Box 4789
 Helena, MT 59604-4789
 Telephone: (406) 841-3911 Fax: (406) 841-3965

Situation Report for Tuesday, July 23, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

Wildfires of 2003

Attention * - New information shown in today's report displayed in ***Bold Italics*** type.

I. - **Background Information:**

- Montana has been experiencing an extended period of drought. Recently, the state has also suffered through a period of unseasonably hot weather. The combination of these two factors resulted in a significant increase in "initial attack" fire activity. Worsening fire/weather conditions and a lack of available resources are causing a dramatic increase in the percentage of new fires that escape "initial attack" efforts. Fire managers are predicting conditions that may rival those of 2000.

II. - **Current Montana Fire Conditions:** (as reported to NRCC last evening)

- **Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 4** **National Preparedness Level = 4**
- ***Previous 24 hours; light initial attack – 30 new fires for 18,419 acres***
- ***Wedge Canyon – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Sandman), 4,250 acres, 5% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.***
- ***Frog Pond – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Frye) has been ordered, 4,000 acres, 0% contained, 34 nautical miles S of Hamilton, Montana.***
- Dillon Interagency Dispatch Center reported that highway officials have closed Montana Highway 43, west of Wisdom, MT.
- ***Missouri Breaks Complex - Type 2 Incident Management Team (Gray), 117,400 acres, 30% contained. This Complex is made up of the Big Coulee (23,500 acres), Ghost Coulee (1,000 acres – 100% contained), Germaine (60,500 acres) and Indian (32,400) fires. Complex located 35 miles NW of Jordan, Montana.***
- ***Big Creek – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Swope), 916 acres, 0% contained, 4 miles NW of Victor, Montana.***
- ***Hidden Lake – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Chrisman), 1,000 acres, 0% contained, 30 miles W of Dillon, Montana.***
- ***Long Mountain – 158 acres, 50% contained, 2 miles E of Neihart, Montana.***

- Trapper Creek Complex - Fire Use Team (Cook), 4,300 acres, 0% contained, This Complex is made up the Trapper Creek (3,600 acres), Paul Bunyan (200 acres) and Wolf Gun (500 acres) fires located 45 statute miles NE of Kalispell, MT.
- Indian Spring – 720 acres, 20% contained, 35 miles S of Billings, Montana.

- **STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA**
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
500 AM MDT WED JUL 23 2003

WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Today – Sunny. Highs 92 To 102.

Tonight - Mostly Clear. Lows 50 To 60.

Thursday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs 85 To 95.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Today - Sunny. Highs 90 To 101.

Tonight - Mostly Clear. Slight Chance Thunderstorm. Lows In The Mid 50s To Lower 60s.

Thursday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Thunderstorms Afternoon. Highs In The Mid 80s To Lower 90s.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Today - Sunny. Highs In The Mid 80s To Mid 90s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy Slight Chance Thunderstorms In Evening. Lows In Lower To Mid 50s.

Thursday - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Thunderstorms In Afternoon. Highs In The Lower 80s To Lower 90s.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA

Today - Mostly Sunny. Highs 95 To 105.

Tonight - Mostly Clear. A Slight Chance Of Evening Thunderstorms Southwest. Lows In The Upper 50s To Upper 60s.

Thursday - Partly Cloudy And Continued Hot. Slight Chance Of Thunderstorms Southwest. Highs In The 90s To Near 100.

III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuation of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

<u>Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations</u>		<u>Date Filed</u>
Cascade County	Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.)	7/15/03
Garfield County	Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks)	7/15/03
Beaverhead County	Emergency Resolution (multiple fires)	7/17/03
Ravalli County	Emergency Declaration (Big Creek)	7/20/03
Flathead County	Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon)	7/21/03
Sanders County	Resolution (Level I Fire Restrictions)	
7/17/03		

<u>Fire Restrictions and Closures</u>		<u>Effective Date</u>
Northwestern Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 21, 2003
Southwestern Zone	None	N/A
Central Montana Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 18, 2003
South Central Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 18, 2003
Eastern Montana Zone	Stage I Restrictions (Billings)	July 18, 2003
	Stage I Restrictions (Lewistown)	July 21, 2003
	None (Miles City)	N/A

IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:

State Declaration:

On 7/18/03, Governor Judy Martz signed an Executive Order (# 14-03) in which she declared a statewide emergency thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens.

Requests for State Assistance:

- Montana DES is supplying two individuals to Garfield County serving as Agency Representatives, assisting with disaster recovery efforts.
- The Montana National Guard is assisting "initial attack" fire suppression operations by supplying 2 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters and approximately 20 people. One helicopter is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, and the other is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center. One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.

Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is operating at Activation Level III with extended hours (0700-1900 every day).

- The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1900-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.